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# How to Win Elections and Influence Parties: Party and Electoral System Development and Manipulation in the Republic of China

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By James Cutchin

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## Abstract

This work asserts that the Chinese Nationalist Party (KMT) has been able to retain power in Taiwan's apparently competitive democratic system through manipulation of the political party and electoral systems. These systems have a close relationship in which the electoral system is a result of the party system. During Taiwan's transition to democracy the KMT was able to use their one party dominant position to establish an electoral system which favored them in elections. This electoral system in turn shaped the emerging political party system to the benefit of the KMT. Over time, as political conditions in Taiwan shifted, the KMT was able to alter the electoral and party systems to adapt to their changing needs.

## Table of Contents

Chapter and Topic	Page
Chapter I: The KMT Political Miracle	4
Introduction	4
Literature Review	7
Chapter II: Taiwan's Long Road to Democracy	19
KMT Rule and Origins of Democracy in Taiwan	19
Transition from Authoritarian Rule to Democracy	23
Consolidation of Democracy in Taiwan	29
Chapter III: Electoral Analysis	34
Theoretical Context	34
1991 National Assembly Election	41
1996 Presidential Election	49
2000 Presidential Election and DPP Rule	53
2008 Return of the KMT	59
Conclusion	70
Bibliography	74

## **Chapter I:**

### **The KMT Political Miracle**

#### **Introduction: The KMT, From Failure to Success**

In 1949 the Chinese Nationalist Party (KMT) was the definition of a failed and impotent political force. After decades of holding loose control over a weak and backwards China, the Nationalist Party was driven from the mainland by a peasant army of Communist rebels. The corrupt and dysfunctional KMT government fled to the island of Taiwan to prevent its total annihilation by Communist forces. In essence, by 1949 the KMT were little more than a group of political exiles holed up on an undeveloped island in the Pacific Ocean.

Six decades later the KMT was the ruling party in one of the wealthiest and most developed nations in Asia. They also sat at the head of a political system widely hailed as one of the shining examples of democracy in the Eastern world. They had power, money, and a reputation for efficiency and success. What the KMT had executed could be described as nothing short of a political miracle. The party had come from the brink of destruction to gaining nearly everything modern political groups strive towards.

This reversal of fortune was not coincidence. It was not merely through happy circumstance and the good will of the public that the KMT was able to maintain political control in such a developed, prosperous, and democratic nation. I contend that it was instead through deft manipulation of Taiwan's electoral and party system development that the KMT retained its expansive power. Through a series of complex and intricate processes, the former authoritarian party was able simultaneously to manipulate both Taiwan's electoral and political party systems

to suit its goals. It is in part due to the complex nature of the relationship between these two systems that the KMT has been able to obscure these manipulations. It is also due to the unusual and often perplexing nature of Taiwan's electoral system that KMT actions in this respect have gone largely unobserved.

In this thesis I will ascertain the nature of the relationship between Taiwan's political party and electoral systems. To this end I will investigate the question: How does the political party system influence electoral outcomes in Taiwan? I hypothesize that the KMT instituted a multi-party system specifically designed to favor and strengthen their positions in elections. I also propose that Taiwan's electoral system has an endogenous relationship with its party system. Here I follow Kenneth Benoit's definition of 'endogeneity' which is explained in chapter one of this thesis.

In the course of this thesis I will analyze Taiwan's party and electoral systems in contrast to political science models. These include works by prominent political scientists on democratic political development, as well as historical reports and analyses of political events in Taiwan. I examine party decisions especially through laws, political debates, and campaigns by prominent Taiwanese politicians including debates and campaign ads. Combined with broader secondary source analysis, these materials will provide the historical framework for my analysis. By examining these events through the lens of existing political science theory I will attempt to present a possible explanation behind some of Taiwan's complex historical and political developments.

I begin with a review of literature regarding relevant political science theory and historical developments in Taiwan. I use much of this scholarship as a starting point and base on

which to build later developments. The literature review section in particular is designed to provide an introduction to relevant political science models and concepts to readers not previously familiar with such subject matter. Following this background analysis is a detailing of Taiwan's slow transition to democracy and preliminary electoral system development. This roughly 40-year period of authoritarian KMT rule had considerable influence on events that took place after Taiwan's transition to democracy. The chapter is designed to illuminate how the structure of the modern Taiwanese political system developed and to emphasize the unique nature of the KMT's path to modern political dominance. Chapters one and two tend to focus on political science theory and Taiwanese political sociology respectively. Some readers may find it appropriate to spend less time on sections with topics they are highly versed in, while spending more time on topics they are less familiar with. An understanding of both of these subjects is necessary to a complete understanding of later analysis. In chapter three, I discuss and analyze the important elections and political developments following Taiwan's democratic transition. This is the core of my argument and is perhaps most important to understanding the modern political situation in Taiwan. In essence, this chapter represents the application of previously discussed political science models to the individual cases of Taiwanese elections. It details the actual unfolding of electoral events and the KMT's movements in the modern Taiwanese political system. This breakdown of events allows a clear distinction between events that adhere to prevailing political science models and those that run counter to them. The chapter ends with a series of conclusions drawn from the results of my research and analysis.

## **Literature Review: Political Science Models in Relation to Taiwan**

In this section I will review existing literature, especially by leading theorists such as Kenneth Benoit, in order to introduce concepts like district magnitude and the introduction of systemic changes. In the case of Taiwan, I agree with Benoit's assertion that party politics often drive electoral systems.

In his essay "Electoral Laws as Political Consequences" Kenneth Benoit redefines the relationship between the development of electoral systems and political parties. A key concept in his study is that of "endogeneity," or a state in which two phenomenon have mutual creating and shaping effects on each other, rather than any real or direct causal relationship. Benoit questions the traditional model for the study of this question, in which political party systems result from electoral systems; he contends instead that the relationship between party systems and electoral systems is largely endogenous, and in some cases is actually driven by party policy and influence rather electoral structure. This theoretical structure is congruous with the results of my research. I therefore contend that in the case of Taiwan, Benoit's model holds true.

Kenneth Benoit refutes Maurice Duverger's widely accepted hypothesis that the simple majority single ballot system favors a two-party system. The hypothesis implies that two-party systems often develop as a result of the instillation of a simple majority single ballot system and that multi-party systems often result from proportional representation electoral systems. Benoit does note, however, that Duverger qualifies this assertion with several statements suggesting that electoral systems are also to some degree influenced by party systems (Electoral Laws, Benoit 364). My research on the relationship between Taiwan's party and electoral systems is largely congruous with Benoit's proposed model. The Taiwan case affirms a model in which electoral



systems are the result of political party machinations, which are in turn are shaped by the emerging electoral system.

In “Electoral Laws as Political Consequences,” Benoit contests Duverger’s hypothesis in order to assert that the causal relationship between electoral systems and party systems is either reversed or endogenous in nature. Benoit argues in partisan environments, political parties often drive the institutionalization of electoral systems. As members of parties, political actors have vested interests in creating a system that best suits their needs. Larger parties tend to favor simple majority single ballot systems as these systems aid in the consolidation of their political power and help discourage the formation of factions and new parties. Smaller parties, on the other hand, will likely support proportional representation electoral systems as this will allow them to continue to be effective despite their smaller share of votes. As such, the initial distribution of power within this preliminary party system will shape the electoral system in which the parties will exist (Electoral Laws, Benoit 366). Again, nearly all of Kenneth Benoit’s assertions here apply to the political situation in Taiwan. The actions of the KMT almost exactly fit Benoit’s description of a dominant political actor legislating electoral rules to suit its purposes. The relationship between PR vs plurality rules and party power also appear in Taiwan largely as Benoit would predict, with a few notable exceptions discussed later in this thesis.

Benoit’s theories help us to understand changes in electoral systems in Taiwan during a period of relative stability. Benoit contests the commonly accepted notion that electoral systems must stabilize over time. He cites several examples of well-established democracies, such as those in Japan and New Zealand, in which the electoral system has been significantly altered despite their apparent stability (Electoral Law, Benoit 385). Electoral systems may change if the distribution of power shifts within an already existing party system, or key political actors expect

to gain from those system changes. In order for change to occur, either new political parties must gain power, or existing parties must perceive some advantage in the adjustment of the current electoral system (Electoral Laws, Benoit 387). This phenomenon manifested itself in Taiwan when the DPP began to gain power. Reforms were undertaken, notably the reform of the Legislative Yuan's electoral rules, as the DPP gained the ability to push for a system that better suited its interests. More notable, however, is that the KMT collaborated with the DPP to institute these changes as they also carried certain benefits for the KMT.

In "District Magnitude, Electoral Formula, and the Number of Parties" is a second highly relevant article by Kenneth Benoit. It is closely related to "Electoral Laws as Political Consequences" in both subject and contention. In this article Benoit deals more specifically with the mechanics of electoral functions and their relation to party systems. In particular he examines the concept of district magnitude, or the number of seats allotted to represent a district in a legislative body. Most established theories on district magnitude indicate that higher numbers of seats, or larger district magnitude, lead to greater numbers of political parties, while smaller district magnitude will result in fewer political parties (District Magnitude, Benoit 204). Benoit argues that while this correlation is generally true, if electoral formula is not controlled for, resulting correlations drawn between district magnitude and number of parties can be skewed or even reversed.

If proportional representation is in effect in a district then it is usually true that greater district magnitude leads to a greater number of political parties, as more seats are available to represent the interests of smaller parties (District Magnitude, Benoit 204). Benoit asserts however, that if plurality rules govern the electoral formula in a district then this relationship is reversed and greater district magnitude actually leads to smaller numbers of political parties.

The remainder of Benoit's article consists of a case study of 1994 Hungarian elections that Benoit uses to support his claims. The analysis of electoral results in this case study supports Benoit's assertions and indicate that both district magnitude and electoral formula must be considered in order to accurately gauge their effects on party systems (District Magnitude, Benoit 220).

Unlike Kenneth Benoit's work in *Electoral Laws as Political Consequences*, events in Taiwan largely run counter to his assertions regarding district magnitude. Conditions in the 1990s surrounding the National Assembly and Legislative Yuan elections present particularly clear examples of this. Despite having had an electoral system marked by a prevalence of both high district magnitude and plurality rules, high numbers of political parties existed in Taiwan at this time. The reasons behind this are fairly complex and are discussed in detail later in in chapter three of this thesis.

*Setting the Rules of the Game: The Choice of Electoral Systems in Advanced Democracies* by Carles Boix asserts that electoral systems are the result of conscious decisions by political parties made to maximize their representation in the government. Boix contends that if no changes occur in the electoral arena then the ruling parties will be unmotivated to alter the electoral system and it will remain constant. If, however there are shifts in political power, or the ruling party anticipates such shifts, then capable parties will act and alter the electoral system in their favor (Boix 609). According to his argument, larger more powerful ruling parties will tend to maintain or introduce plurality rules in order to solidify their position. If smaller parties gain greater power, or the ruling party anticipates that the current system will erode its power in the foreseeable future, proportional representation will likely be introduced or maintained (Boix 609). Additionally Boix contends that the introduction of proportional representation tends to the be

the work of left wing parties who are often less well entrenched in the political system than conservative parties and therefore have more to gain by the rise of new parties (Boix 609).

Many of the concepts that Boix proposes are highly similar to those brought forth by Benoit. For the purposes of this thesis, Boix largely serves as a source of more in-depth theory on the likely actions and reactions resulting from shifts in political party power. Additionally, Boix's final contention as to the relationship between left-wing parties and proportional representation is applicable in Taiwan. As his theory would suggest, the left-wing DPP was the force behind shifts towards PR in the early 2000s. Contrary to what his theory might suggest, however, this deviation led to a smaller, rather than greater number of political parties. Possible reasons behind this are discussed in the theoretical context section of this thesis.

District Magnitude, Social Heterogeneity and Local Party System Fragmentation by Benny Geys discusses the role that socioeconomic factors play in the formation of party systems. Geys defines the two main approaches to the analysis of party system structures and formation as the institutional approach and the sociological approach. The institutional approach emphasizes the role of electoral laws and encompasses the majority of the above described research on the subject. The sociological approach focuses on the effects of socioeconomic heterogeneity in the formation of party systems (Geys 281). Geys argues that in order to determine accurately causal factors and relationships in this process both institutional and sociological approaches must be utilized. He hypothesizes that both high levels of socioeconomic cleavages and permissive electoral laws must be in place in order to foster the development of a diverse multi-party system (Geys 282). To substantiate this claim Geys analyzes a sample set of Belgian municipal elections over a twelve year period controlling for both socioeconomic and institutional factors (Geys 281).

Geys' findings in his analysis support his hypothesis that relatively high levels socioeconomic cleavages and permissive electoral laws are much more accurate predictors of multi-party systems than institutional factors alone. He concludes that the influences of socioeconomic heterogeneity and district magnitude are mutually interactive forces. The effect of electoral laws on the party system is greatly strengthened or reduced according to the level of socioeconomic heterogeneity and vice versa (Geys 294).

Geys' hypothesis on socioeconomic heterogeneity is relevant to Taiwan's ethnic Taiwanese vs Mainland Chinese divides. This duality has played a significant role in shaping Taiwanese politics, especially in regards to politicians campaign tactics. This dynamic, as well as most features of the Taiwanese political system, are somewhat unique in Taiwan. Political science theory alone can do little to explain many of the particularities of the Taiwanese system. It is therefore necessary to examine the social and historical context of political events in Taiwan, in order to more fully comprehend the nature of politics in Taiwan.

Taiwan: A Political History by Denny Roy provides a comprehensive and unbiased political history of Taiwan through its many upheavals and power transitions. Roy's account is somewhat unique and highly useful to my research in that it is both highly detailed and largely objective. While both of these qualities individually are not difficult to find in works concerning Taiwanese politics, they rarely appear together. Most works are either somewhat general and incomplete in nature or contain an obvious bias for or against Taiwanese independence. By avoiding this Roy provides a thorough and believable assessment of the development and early years of Taiwanese democracy.

Roy's Taiwan: a Political History begins with Taiwan's early history as a primitive island nation and continues through the early years of the Chen Shui-bian presidency. Much of this, however, is largely irrelevant to my research and therefore I will refrain from discussing the first 54 pages which detail the early history of Taiwan through the end of colonial Japanese rule. I will instead focus on the latter three quarters of Roy's work, which begin with the return of Taiwan to mainland Chinese control under the Chinese nationalist party, the Kuomintang (KMT). While my research does not deal directly with the period of authoritarian KMT rule in Taiwan, it is nevertheless crucial to the development of Taiwan's current political system.

The central third of the book describes the period of KMT authoritarian rule on Taiwan and the gradual transition to democracy over the last half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Roy explains that ethnic differences divided Taiwanese society during the early years of KMT rule and perpetuated authoritarian rule by the elite mainland Chinese minority. As time progressed the party accepted growing numbers of Taiwanese members and eased ethnic tensions between the native Taiwanese and mainland Chinese (Roy 154). Additionally, the KMT instituted gradual political and economic reforms that moved the island slowly towards democracy. Economic liberalization policies were highly successful and quickly made Taiwan into one of the wealthiest and most developed nations in Asia (Roy 99). This, coupled with the KMT's willingness to liberalize and institute democratic reforms, put the party in a unique position when Taiwan finally completed its transition to democracy in the early 1990's.

Unlike many authoritarian regimes, the KMT government chose to undergo the transition to democracy at a relatively high point in its popularity. This allowed the former authoritarian group to have a controlling say in the construction of electoral institutions and to enter the democratic electoral arena under favorable conditions. By the time the first national legislative

and presidential elections occurred in the mid-1990's the KMT was able to retain majority control of the government under largely fair democratic conditions (Roy 193, 201). In the late 1990's however, poor performance by the KMT president, as well as factionalism within the party eroded the KMT's political position (Roy 203-205). In 2000, a newly consolidated opposition under the Democratic Progressive Party (DDP) won the presidency and temporarily ended KMT rule on Taiwan (Roy 227).

As its name suggests, a second key source on Taiwanese political for this thesis Taiwan: Nation-State or Province? by John F. Copper deals largely with the debate surrounding Taiwan's status as a sovereign nation. Copper discusses many of the same events as Denny Roy, and even goes into a slight degree of further detail regarding the political mechanisms involved in and resulting from these occurrences. Additionally, since this new 6<sup>th</sup> edition of Copper's work was published in mid-2013 it can be said to be a complete history of modern Taiwanese politics to the present. The downside to this work vis-à-vis Denny Roy's is that there appears to be a subtle, but detectable bias toward the position of Taiwanese reunification with mainland China. While this apparent bias does not seem to influence Copper's analysis of the political situation in Taiwan in any major way, it is enough to raise slight doubts as to his emphasis on the importance of certain events.

All doubts aside, this work is a detailed and highly useful resource regarding the debate over Taiwanese sovereignty. The political status of Taiwan is the elephant in the room in Taiwanese politics and this controversy overshadows nearly every aspect of the Taiwanese political arena. Elections are won and lost over issues surrounding this debate and it would be impossible to create any sort of political analysis of Taiwan without considering its influence.

As useful basis for which to understand the psychology of Taiwan's political environment, Copper's analysis of the origins of Taiwanese political culture should also be mentioned. He concludes that its components are a mixture resulting from Taiwan's long history of subjugation by foreign powers. Emphasis of society over the individual has remained from times of Japanese colonial rule, while concern for moral and ethical behavior in politics has resulted from the survival of Confucian values. Finally, concepts of democracy and popular elections emerged from Taiwan's long cold war isolation, close ties to the United States, and a desire to legitimate the government in the eyes of western nations (Copper 111).

Following on the theme of Taiwanese sovereignty vs unity with mainland China is Taiwan's Rising Rationalism: Generations, Politics, and "Taiwanese Nationalism." In this work, Shelly Rigger makes a convincing case for the waning of Taiwanese nationalism and the emergence of increasingly positive views toward Taiwanese reunification with the Chinese mainland. She contests the idea that there are rising feelings of Taiwanese nationalism among the youth which will make cross-strait reconciliation more difficult with the passing of time. Rigger uses generational analysis to show that it is largely the older Taiwanese population who express nationalist sentiment and tend to support independence, while Taiwanese youth have increasingly positive views of China. She concludes that the results of her study indicate that over time relations between Taiwan and mainland China will grow increasingly closer, until the point at which reunification is more of a formality than a political revolution.

The second book by John F. Copper utilized in this thesis runs concurrent with Shelly Rigger's assessment of Taiwan. Taiwan's Democracy on Trial encompasses an in depth analysis of Chen Shui-bian's presidency and Democratic Progressive Party rule over Taiwan. As the first and only non-KMT president in Taiwanese history, the Chen administration's rule from 2000 to



2008 was a crucial time in the political development of Taiwan. His election in 2000 was the final proof that Taiwan was a full democracy and even the highest KMT official in the nation could be voted out of office.

As in Copper's above mentioned work, Taiwan: Nation-State or Province?, the author betrays somewhat of a bias in favor of the KMT. Copper's thorough denunciation of Chen Shui-bian at times fails to feel objective due to its harshness. Copper does, however, rely nearly entirely on factual analysis and logic to support his conclusions and therefore this analysis is still a valuable resource with which to examine eight crucial years in Taiwanese democracy.

Copper's analysis of Chen Shui-bian's presidency concludes that he was a poor leader, who harmed Taiwanese national interest, including many causes which he claimed to champion. Copper asserts that under Chen's reign human rights, press freedom, ethnic relations, economic performance, and clean governance all deteriorated (Taiwan's Democracy Copper 83). Chen Shui-bian also harmed the cause of Taiwanese independence, which was a founding principle of his party, by alienating the United States and increasing Taiwan's economic dependence on mainland China (Taiwan's Democracy Copper 83).

Shifting to a more specific case-analysis of Taiwanese electoral politics is *The Legislative Yuan Elections in Taiwan: Consequences of the Electoral System*. This article by Andrew J. Nathan deals specifically with the electoral system in place during Taiwan's first, nationwide democratic election in 1992. Taiwan's Legislative Yuan represents the legislative branch of the Taiwanese government and has several important functions including the power to pass laws, review the budget, and approve the nomination of the premier (Nathan 424). As such, the

election of this body under Taiwan's first national democratic election marks an important step in the consolidation of Taiwanese democracy.

In this essay Nathan examines the electoral system of nearly all democratically elected positions present in Taiwan at this time. Most notable however, is his description of the Legislative Yuan's electoral system and its influence on election results. The election was held under the somewhat rare single-vote, multi-member constituency (SVMM) system. This system differs from the single-vote, single-member (SVSM) and proportional representation systems in that each voter only has one vote but there are multiple representatives per electoral district (Nathan 425). This strategic voting that this system encourages is also somewhat unusual. Since more the more candidates who run, the fewer votes are needed to win, large numbers of candidates have incentive to participate in the elections (Nathan 428). The system also creates a unique strategic advantage for KMT candidates. It creates logical incentive and reward for parties that are able to nominate the number of candidates they expect to win with the number of votes they expect to receive, then distribute those votes evenly among candidates so that each candidate has the bare minimum it needs to win (Nathan 432). Only the KMT had the political organization necessary to carry out this process and therefore had somewhat of an advantage in this election. Under this system voters also faced an unusual dilemma. Since they only have one vote for multiple seats, voters often must choose between members of the same party or group that often represent similar interests. Logically they would prefer to vote for the candidate that supports their interests and that they believe has the best chance of winning. However, if this candidate is too popular their vote will be wasted since it will simply be excess and could have been spent on another of their preferred candidates. Conversely, their vote is also wasted if they

cast it in favor of a candidate who is too unpopular and therefore will lose regardless of their support (Nathan 433).

Andrew Nathan's article is of a much smaller scope than any of the previously described analyses of Taiwan's political system. Despite this, its specific description of Taiwanese electoral systems and their political consequences is invaluable. By revealing close ties between the evolution Taiwan's electoral and party systems, Nathan's work represents perhaps one of the most directly relevant resources to my research.

## **Section II:**

### **Taiwan's Long Road to Democracy**

#### **Introduction:**

Democratization is a process that has varied greatly in length and scope across different nations and time periods. In the 20<sup>th</sup> century many transitions to democracy occurred relatively swiftly, often through revolution or rapid liberalization by new leaders. Taiwan's democratization stands in contrast to these cases in that its transition required nearly a half of a century to reach full completion. Since its beginning the KMT stated that it had some eventual intent to democratize. Despite this, Taiwan's unique political situation caused the process of democratization in Taiwan to drag out over most of the last half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Typical roadblocks to liberalization, such as external threats and opposition among conservative elites, impeded the development of democracy in Taiwan, while changes in leadership, as well as pressure both from the Taiwanese people and the international community helped further political liberalization on the island nation.

#### **KMT Rule and the Origins of Democracy in Taiwan:**

The story of democracy in Taiwan began in 1949 when the nationalist government of the Republic of China (ROC) relocated the entirety of its government organs, economic resources, and military to the island. The move was the result of the KMT's recent loss of a long and bloody civil war with the Chinese Communist Party on the mainland. It was essentially a retreat intended to prevent the annihilation of the nationalist government and allow them to regroup and prepare for a counter attack on communists to retake the mainland. This goal of a military

recapture of China was to remain the main focus of the KMT in Taiwan for the next two decades (Roy 2003, 77).

During the first several decades of its rule, the ROC in Taiwan operated under a one-party authoritarian system in which the division between KMT and the government was indistinct. All officials in the government were members of the KMT and local Taiwanese were largely exempt from politics. The KMT employed the use of a large propaganda machine to promote its agenda, and utilized a powerful security apparatus to ensure that its policies were obeyed. Beginning in May of 1949 the entire island of Taiwan was placed under martial law, a policy which would not be reversed for 37 years (Roy 2003, 78).

One of the factors that Paul Brooker (Brooker 2009, 134) discusses in his analysis on one-party regimes and maintenance of control in authoritarian systems is the use of an external enemy threat to legitimate the regime. During the first two decades of their rule on Taiwan, the KMT relied largely on this tactic in order to maintain legitimacy. The People's Republic of China on the mainland was depicted as a communist bandit uprising that had temporarily taken control of the government. The KMT claimed that the harsh restrictions on society that it implemented were designed to protect the Taiwanese people from Communist attack (Roy 2003, 79).

Although the local population of Taiwan had a strong dislike for mainland Chinese and the KMT government, they were aware of the stark reality that ROC rule was necessary for their safety. Despite the harshness of KMT rule, it was largely viewed as the preferable alternative to rule by the Chinese Communists. Mao Zedong had no base for support in Taiwan and therefore could only plausibly wrest the island from nationalist control through a military invasion. The

Taiwanese people were aware that conflict of this sort would be fought on Taiwanese soil with huge costs in loss of life and property damage (Copper 2013, 47). Therefore, in the Taiwanese case, the use of an external enemy to legitimate authoritarian rule was very effective in the short term.

The founder of the KMT, Sun Yat-sen had included in the party's original doctrine that democracy was an eventual goal of the party. The KMT in Taiwan continued to espouse this goal, with several limitations. Party policy alleged that a period of KMT party dictatorship was necessary in order to establish the proper conditions for democracy in Taiwan. According to Brooker (Brooker 2009, 137) this is another common claim that authoritarian regimes make in a bid for legitimacy. By claiming this eventual goal of democracy the KMT desired to set itself apart from the CCP on the mainland who had no such goal. Additionally, to solidify the plausibility of this claim, the KMT began to hold elections at the local level soon after their arrival in Taiwan. These elections were somewhat competitive, and it was certainly possible for non-KMT candidates to win seats, however the odds were heavily slanted in the KMT's favor. KMT candidates enjoyed the full financial backing of the government to finance their campaigns and would often provide voters with food, transportation, entertainment, and gifts. Since opposition parties were illegal under ROC rule, non-KMT candidates were forced to run as independents and therefore lacked the support and funding that political parties typically provide (Roy 2003, 85). Despite the transparency of this attempt to legitimate an authoritarian regime, the establishment of local elections was an important step in Taiwan's democratization.

Performance legitimacy often arises as the primary method of maintaining legitimacy in many authoritarian regimes (Huntington 1991, 46). Regimes employing performance legitimacy attempt to justify their domination of the nation through evidence of the economic and

developmental benefits that their policies bring. The KMT realized the benefit of this approach early on as it became clear that a swift recapture of mainland China from communist forces would not be possible. Beginning in the mid-1950's the KMT regime began a series of measures liberalizing the economy, including the privatization of many state-owned industries. These reforms continued through the 1960's with tax cuts, land reform, and continued privatization that shifted the Taiwanese economic system from that of a control economy to one of market capitalism. These reforms were highly successful and over the following two decades Taiwan boasted one of the fastest growing economies in the world (Copper 2013, 49). This feat greatly increased the KMT regime's legitimacy domestically and abroad thus supporting the concept of performance legitimacy and its potential value to an authoritarian regime.

In their 2005 article "International Linkage and Democratization," Levitsky and Way discuss the concepts of linkage and leverage and their effects on democratization (Levitsky 2005). Linkage is a measure of the degree to which the nation is connected economically, socially, and geopolitically to other nations, specifically other to democracies. Higher degrees of connection to democracies increase the political costs of supporting oppressive regimes. Leverage, on the other hand, is the ability to directly and forcefully exert pressure on an outside government through measures such as economic sanctions, diplomatic pressure, and military intervention. Linkage is generally considered to be a more effective democratizing force than leverage. Leverage can have unintended consequences, especially in the case of military interventions, and can occasionally backfire and increase feelings of nationalism and support for the regime. Since linkage is less heavy-handed and works from within the nation it is much more difficult for the authoritarian regime to circumvent and much less likely to backfire.

Although the foresight to initiate the economic liberalization which led to Taiwan's rapid development could be contributed in part to the KMT leadership, there was also external influence on this decision. The United States government took measures to increase both its linkage and leverage with Taiwan with a high degree of success. In the late 1950's the United States offered extensive economic aid to Taiwan under the condition that they liberalize their economy and move towards economic capitalism. This is a clear example of leverage through conditionality. Only by liberalizing would the KMT receive United States aid to spur the development of Taiwan. By the time this aid ceased in 1964, Taiwan's economy was essentially a market capitalist system and its development was largely self-sustained (Copper 2013, 49).

Economic liberalization in Taiwan also increased the island's linkage with democratic nations. As the Taiwanese people and the KMT government began to realize that exports needed to be a major focus to ensure economic prosperity, increased international trade made the island more open and cosmopolitan. This helped facilitate the gradual spread of more liberal and less extremist political philosophies among the Taiwanese people, as well as some members of the KMT regime (Copper 2013, 49)

### **Transition from Authoritarianism to Democracy**

In The Third Wave, Huntington (Huntington 1991) argues that transitions to democracy can be grouped into three types: transformation, replacement, and transplacement. Transformations are transitions in which the authoritarian regime and ruling elites are the main drivers of democratization. They are characterized first by the emergence of softliners within the ruling party, or elites willing to initiate some degree of liberalization within the regime, followed by the rise to power of these actors. Limited liberalization by these individuals then is



unsuccessful and democracy emerges as the only viable way forward. Regime leaders then work together with opposition forces to design a transition to a democratic system.

Replacement can be seen as the opposite of transformation in the sense that the transition to democracy is driven by the opposition forces rather than the ruling elites. This course is characterized by a successful struggle by opposition forces to topple the authoritarian regime, followed by a rapid struggle to form a new regime in its place. This is likely the least desirable of the three types of transitions as the sudden removal of the authoritarian regime creates a power vacuum that has the potential to destabilize the country.

As their name suggests, transplacements fall somewhere between transformations and replacements. In transplacements, both regime and non-government actors work together to negotiate the transition to democracy. As the regime leaders take limited liberalization measures they begin to lose some of their power and control. Opposition forces then utilize this loss of control to intensify their action against the regime, to which incites forceful suppression by the government. Eventually the two sides reach a standoff and realize that a negotiated transition is the only way forward.

Of these Huntington's three types of transitions to democracy the only type that can be definitively ruled out in the Taiwanese case is replacement. During no part of Taiwan's transition to democracy can opposition forces have been said to gain the upper hand. Even when Taiwan's democracy was consolidated in the 2000 presidential election, the nationalist party did not fall; it simply lost the presidency. The democratization process leading up to this transition was gradual and largely planned and at no point was there any sort of open struggle to develop a new system of government (Copper 2013, 58).

Taiwan's transition to democracy could therefore best be described as a transformation with some elements of transplacement. The increased political liberalization and democratization on the island was engineered and guided by the ruling KMT elite following the gradual emergence of softliners within the party. While these are the typical circumstances for a transformation, the transition in Taiwan was also the result of decades of increasing pressure from opposition forces and would not likely have been undertaken without their influence.

Since its arrival on Taiwan, the KMT had espoused democracy as an eventual goal of the party. By the mid-1970's however, many Taiwanese believed that the pace of this democratization was beginning to appear too slow to be meaningful. The lack of ability to garner legitimacy through commitment to eventual democracy put increased pressure on the KMT regime to liberalize. Additionally, the immediate threat of war with the mainland that had helped to justify many of the KMT's harsher authoritarian restrictions on Taiwanese society was beginning to dissipate, further eroding the legitimacy of continued one-party dictatorship. These pressures led to liberalization measures over the next two decades that eventually culminated in full democratization on Taiwan (Roy 2003, 153).

Since the arrival of the KMT on Taiwan in 1949, four fifths of the population of Taiwan had been native Taiwanese. Despite this, until the 1970's the small minority of mainland Chinese had occupied nearly every position in the KMT government. This naturally created feelings of resentment among the native Taiwanese population who felt that they were being dominated by a foreign presence. This was an increasingly destabilizing factor the KMT regime as Taiwan's economic development enabled the rise of larger and larger numbers of Taiwanese economic elites. In order to help resolve this issue, the KMT realized that it would need to give the Taiwanese greater ability to participate in the government. Beginning in the early 1970's the

KMT began admitting Taiwanese to the party and letting them occupy positions in the government. By 1985 Taiwanese occupied all government positions at the city and county levels, as well as 75 percent of positions at the provincial level, and one third of the seats on the KMT central standing committee (Copper 2013, 154). These Taiwanese brought with them more liberal and democratic goals for KMT rule and many would eventually become that softliners that helped drive Taiwan's democratization.

Ironically, the presence of the communist government on mainland China was also a strong impetus in the development of democracy on Taiwan. As time wore on it became clear to even the most hardline KMT elites that the only possibility of retaking the mainland would be through political means. To accomplish this, the KMT would have to establish Taiwan as a model for a free and successful Chinese state that Chinese on the mainland could look to as a preferable alternative to communist rule. This was obviously not possible if Taiwan was under the control of a repressive authoritarian government and therefore at least some political liberalization was seen to be necessary (Roy 2003, 155).

In the book Democratization, Christian Welzel (Bernhagen 2009, 89) discusses a causal model for mass responsive democratization. The model indicates that a "national or domestic trigger event" often immediately precipitates democratization in an authoritarian state. While Taiwan's course of democratization could not truly be considered mass responsive democratization, pressure from the Taiwanese people was certainly an important factor Taiwan's transition to democracy. The power change that occurred in Taiwan following KMT leader, Chiang Kai-shek's death could be considered one major trigger event.

In 1978 Chiang Ching-kuo assumed the presidency of the ROC. While his father and predecessor, Chiang Kai-shek had ruled in a heavy-handed dictatorial manner, Chiang Ching-kuo was a reformer who took many bold and crucial steps to democratize Taiwan. He began in the late 1970's by rooting out corrupt and incompetent officials in the government and loosening restrictions on the press, particularly in regard to reporting on government officials and policies. In 1980 Chiang Ching-kuo oversaw Taiwan's first national democratic election, followed by a second in 1983. Although the elections favored KMT members, and all opposition candidates had to run as independents, the elections were still largely competitive. Despite the lack of true fairness in these elections they greatly furthered the cause of democratization because they helped to ease the fear of many KMT elites that they would fall into political oblivion in a multi-party system (Copper 2013, 53).

In a 1986 meeting of the KMT's central committee Chiang Ching-kuo called for major reforms in the government that established the foundation for true democracy in Taiwan. Most crucial among these reforms were the restructuring of parliament, the end of martial law, and a lifting on the ban on the formation of new political parties. As a direct result of these reforms the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) became the first legal opposition party in Taiwanese history. It and the KMT participated in the first two-party election in December of 1986 competing for seats in the Legislative Yuan and the National Assembly (Copper 2013, 53).

In Transitions from Authoritarian Rule, O'Donnell and Schmitter examine the importance of the emergence of hardliners and softliners in the process of democratization. This is highly relevant to the case of Taiwanese democratization due to the driving role that the authoritarian KMT regime had in the liberalization and transition process. Had softliners such as

Chiang Ching-kuo not emerged as a controlling force within the KMT it is unlikely that opposition forces would have been able or willing to force democratization on Taiwan.

O'Donnell and Schmitter (O'Donnell 1986, 16) characterize hardliners as members of the ruling regime that, either for ideological or personal reasons, oppose liberalization and democratization within the government. Self-interest and desire to hold onto power are often motivating factors for these types, although many are driven by a true ideological opposition to democracy. It is often difficult to determine what the true motive of certain hardliners may be, however, since those motivated by personal interest will rarely declare this publically. Chiang Ching-kuo's father, Chiang Kai-shek would certainly fall into the category of hardliner. Chiang Kai-shek was driven by an overriding ideological determination that it was the KMT's destiny to return to mainland China to overthrow the Communist regime. As such, he viewed democratization at best as a lofty future goal to declare for increased legitimacy and at worst as a destabilizing and subversive force in Taiwan (Roy 2003, 83).

In contrast to hardliners, O'Donnell and Schmitter describe softliners as members of the ruling elite that accept at least some degree of liberalization and democratization as necessary inevitabilities. While these types may not necessarily support democracy, they recognize that the regime cannot exist without legitimacy and that legitimacy will be increasingly difficult to maintain under an authoritarian system. O'Donnell and Schmitter also add that the ideal time for an authoritarian regime to initiate a transition to democracy is at a time of strong performance and high success for the regime, but that paradoxically this is also the least likely time for a transition to occur. Since the regime is performing so well during this time it often seems to discredit the softliner argument that liberalization and democratization are necessary and inevitabilities.

After the death of Chiang Kai-shek in 1975, the KMT experienced increasing levels of softliner domination within the party. In fact, the case of Taiwan is unique in the level of success that KMT softliners had in steering government policies towards democratization. This success was so great that the KMT was able to overcome O'Donnell and Schmitter's dilemma of inability to transition at a time of high regime performance. At the time that Chiang Ching-kuo called for the lifting of military rule and an end to the ban on political opposition parties in 1986, Taiwan had one of the most successful economies in the world. In addition, gradual liberalization efforts over the last decade had further increased support for the KMT so that when the transition to democracy was finally undertaken in earnest, the regime was in near total control of the process (Copper 2013, 53). This foresight by KMT softliners is likely the reason that the party has been able to maintain an important position in Taiwanese politics and was voted back into the presidency in 2008 (Copper 2013, 61).

### **Consolidation of Democracy in Taiwan**

Chiang Ching-kuo died in early 1988 and left Lee Teng-hui as president of the ROC and chairman of the KMT. Lee was the first native Taiwanese to lead the KMT and over the next decade oversaw the final stages of the consolidation of Taiwan's democracy. Despite this accomplishment, Lee was a controversial figure who was criticized by both conservatives and reformers alike. KMT conservatives believed that he was moving towards full democratization too rapidly and was secretly supporting Taiwanese independence from the mainland. Reformists, on the other hand, thought that Lee might be more concerned with securing his own personal power than in consolidating democracy (Roy 2003, 183).

In 1991 Lee Teng-hui asked all non-elected officials in the National Assembly to step down. Later that year an election was held and a new National Assembly was formed, many of whose members were reform-minded Taiwanese such as Lee. The KMT performed well in this election and helped to further validate the idea of full democracy in the eyes of the few conservative holdouts within the party. This election paved the way for a meeting of the new National Assembly in March of 1992 and the implementation of several key amendments to the ROC constitution. These included a shortening of members of the National Assembly's terms to four years, the position of mayor in Taiwan's two largest cities becoming elected positions, and an elimination of the paramilitary body which had carried out many of the harsh authoritarian policies of the earlier KMT (Roy 2003, 191).

In 1994 the National Assembly met again and carried out the final great step in democratizing Taiwan's political system. The president and vice-president of the ROC would now be directly elected officials, with the first presidential election to be held in 1996 (Copper 2013, 56). All major positions in the Taiwanese government would now be filled by elected officials. All that remained now was a power change that could signify the true fairness and consolidation of Taiwan's new democracy.

Lee Teng-hui announced that he would be the candidate KMT for president in the 1996 elections, running against the DDP candidate, Peng Ming-min. For a variety of reasons, including the recent successful economic and political liberalization policies that the KMT had implemented, Lee Teng-hui and the KMT won the presidency. The election was generally accepted as fair and competitive, with the DDP loss resulting from factionalism and extremism within the party rather than any undemocratic attempts by the KMT to alter the outcome (Roy 2003, 202).

In chapter 6 of Transitions from Authoritarian Rule, O'Donnell and Schmitter (O'Donnell 1986) argue that authoritarian regimes often overestimate their popular support and are unprepared for their failure in founding elections of new democracies. To support this they cite examples of regimes such as that in Argentina and Brazil who experienced relatively swift transitions from authoritarian government to democracy and often did so under unfavorable circumstances. The Taiwanese case stands in stark contrast to these examples. The KMT had been gradually liberalizing for half of a century and had been earnestly preparing the party and the nation for democracy for at least a decade. The opposition DDP also had little control in the formation of the electoral system in which it would be competing and therefore was less versed in its nuances than the KMT. Finally, due to its highly successful economic policies and willingness to liberalize, the KMT had high levels of popular support at the time of the 1996 election. These factors combined to allow the KMT, the former authoritarian one-party dictatorship of Taiwan, to retain power in a free and democratic election.

The results of the next second presidential election in 2000 were not as favorable to the KMT as the first. Lee Teng-hui decided not to run for reelection, and his replacement candidate, Lien Chan, was somewhat lacking in popular support. While he was highly educated and had much experience in the government, Chan was viewed as somewhat of an aloof elite and therefore had difficulty winning the popular vote. Additionally, the KMT began to factionalize in the 1996 to 2000 period. Much of the party did not support Chen's candidacy and therefore cast their vote with KMT member James Soong, who ran as an independent in the election. These factors left a weakened KMT with a split vote facing a newly united and moderated DDP (Copper 2013, 58).



DDP candidate Chen Shui-bian was a skilled politician who knew how to navigate the new popular election. Chen was younger and from a poor Taiwanese family and was able to utilize these ethnic and socioeconomic roots to gain the sympathy with the common Taiwanese. He moderated many of the extremist policies that had caused the DDP to perform poorly in previous elections, including a cessation of his advocacy for formal Taiwanese independence from the mainland. The DDP had learned from their previous failures and was no longer factionalized as it had been in the 1996 elections. As a result of these changes, the DDP's Chen Shui-bian won the presidency in the 2000 election signaling the final consolidation of democracy in Taiwan (Copper 2013, 59).

Chen Shui-bian won by a slim margin in Taiwan's founding election. His victory was due in large part to factionalism within the KMT and his presidency saw Taiwan experience many political and economic hardships (Copper 2013, 61). Nevertheless, his victory in the 2000 election and reelection in 2004 was one of the most important events in Taiwanese history. They marked the final consolidation of democracy in Taiwan and the end of centuries of authoritarian rule.

## **Conclusion:**

The course of democratization in Taiwan was much longer and more gradual than in most nations. The KMT's half of a century old goal of democratization was a step by step process that began with local elections in the 1950's and culminated with a democratic presidential election in 2000. Factors impeding democracy, such as national security concerns and opposition by regime hardliners, faded over time. Conversely, conditions conducive to democracy, such as the emergence of reformists within the KMT and economic prosperity became more apparent as

time went on. By the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century Taiwan, its people, and its leaders were finally able to complete and consolidate Taiwan's transition to democracy.

### **Section III:**

### **Electoral Analysis**

#### **Theoretical Context**

Much of the political science theory referenced in the following section is previously discussed in the literature review section of this thesis. Despite this, it is helpful to a more complete analysis of Taiwan's founding elections to discuss these concepts specifically within the context of Taiwan. By framing certain events within these theoretical contexts, we can begin to see possible patterns and logical decisions driving events in the seemingly chaotic Taiwanese political landscape.

It is important to note that the topic of Taiwanese electoral politics is relatively common among Chinese language sources in Taiwan. Despite this prevalence of scholarship it is somewhat difficult to locate non-partisan material on the topic. This problem renders much of the Chinese language analysis on the subject unreliable and counterproductive to nonbiased assessments of the KMT and the Taiwanese party and electoral systems. One good example of this is Wu Zhenjia of Taiwan National University's work on the subject. Wu is the author of an extensive work on Taiwanese and Japanese electoral system development. Chapter four of his work details the evolution of Taiwan's electoral system from its embryonic stages under the KMT one-party dictatorship, to its more recent history in the early 2000's. The work asserts that since the early 1990's there has essentially been no electoral system reform in Taiwan (Wu Zhenjia, 152). While this is an interesting perspective on the topic of Taiwanese electoral system development, according to most other sources of scholarship it is largely unfounded. Taiwan has seen a plethora of electoral reforms since its transition to democracy, many of which are detailed

later in this chapter. For a variety of reasons, the many Chinese language sources on electoral system development in Taiwan tend to be similarly influenced by their author's own political concerns. As such, while I include some such sources at relevant points, I attempt to avoid coloring my own assessments with these authors' analytic conclusions.

To frame the political significance of the Taiwan's 1990s elections it is useful to consider prominent political scientist Kenneth Benoit's 2007 essay "Electoral Laws as Political Consequences." As discussed in the literature review of this thesis, Benoit's essay deals largely with the nature of the relationship between political party and electoral systems. He alleges that the two systems are largely endogenous, with both having effects that shape the other (Electoral laws, Benoit 364). In the context of Taiwan this model seems to fit the political landscape during the nation's democratic consolidation, with a few caveats. The 'endogenous' process of party and electoral system formation in Taiwan appears to have been somewhat engineered. Rather than an environment of open partisan debate, the electoral system in Taiwan was largely legislated into existence by the ruling KMT. By most accounts this process was consciously controlled by KMT leadership to design a system that would allow them to retain maximum political power (Dryer, 68). The party system therefore resulted in an electoral system, which in turn shaped the new party system.

Another key point in Benoit's article that is highly applicable to the situation in Taiwan, concerns the manner in which party systems shape electoral rules. According to Benoit, larger parties tend to favor simple majority single ballot, also known as, plurality systems. These types of electoral rules theoretically aid them in consolidating and retaining their power. Conversely, smaller parties will favor proportional representation (PR) systems, since this allows their interests to be represented despite their relatively small bases of support. This is phenomenon

played out almost exactly as Benoit's article would suggest. In the early 1990's the KMT designed electoral system for the National Assembly put 225 of the 325 seats up for election under simple majority single ballot rules. The remaining 100 seats were to be chosen from a proportional slate. This would seem somewhat contrary to the KMT's large party interests, however, closer examination of the rules reveals the origin of the discrepancy. Despite the existence of both plurality and PR elections, each voter was only allowed to cast one vote (Dreyer, 68). This effectively meant that the party that won the plurality elections automatically won the PR elections, thereby nullifying any benefits that the PR elections would normally have for smaller parties. This particularity was accordingly contested by the DPP, who were nevertheless powerless to change it.

A 1999 article in *The American Political Science Review* by Charles Boix puts forward an explanation of party and electoral system interaction that is even more relevant to events in Taiwan. Like Benoit, Boix holds that larger parties will tend to favor the establishment of plurality rules, while smaller parties will tend to favor PR systems. Boix goes further in saying that when smaller parties gain power, they will likely introduce a PR electoral system. This was seemingly the case in Taiwan when the Legislative Yuan under Chen Shui-bian's administration introduced electoral reforms strengthening the PR system. The Legislative Yuan electoral system was switched from plurality rules to a parallel vote system. Under the new system the number of seats in the Legislative Yuan was cut from 225 to 113. 73 of these seats are filled through mixed single-member district elections, 34 are filled from a proportional slate, and 6 are reserved for Taiwanese aboriginals (Yu, 9). While the majority of seats are still filled through plurality rules, the number of seats filled through PR is a marked increase over the previous system. This shift is especially interesting to note, as these changes bear a strong resemblance to

the National Assembly reforms that the DPP had attempted to push for more than a decade previously. On the surface it is also consistent with Boix's additional contention that shifts towards a PR system tend to be the work of left-leaning actors who are less entrenched in the political system (Boix, 609). In theory this should allow these parties greater representation despite lack of entrenchment in the political infrastructure usually characteristic of conservative parties.

It is here that the much of the prevailing theory on party and electoral systems begins to encounter problems. Rather than allowing for greater representation of minority parties and pushing towards a multi-party system, the 2004 Legislative Yuan reforms marginalized smaller parties and strengthened Taiwan's two major parties. In the early 2000's James Soong's Peoples First Party (PFP) and Lee Teng-hui's Taiwan Solidarity Union (TSU) were significant political actors. At the 2001 Legislative Yuan election both minority parties made significant gains and obtained enough influence that many speculated Taiwan was on its way to a multi-party system (Copper, 60). After the reforms had taken effect however, both the PFP and the TSU were marginalized to the point of near insignificance. The 2008 Legislative Yuan elections saw cutting losses for both parties, the KMT assuming a significant majority and the DPP taking the position of opposition minority (Yu, 10).

Why did the shift to a parallel voting system marginalize, rather than strengthen minority parties in Taiwan? The answer lies in the unique nature of the electoral system previously utilized to fill seats in the Legislative Yuan. This could best be described as a single-vote multi-member constituency (SVMM) system. Under these rules, most districts have multiple representatives but each voter can only cast one vote. The system is highly unique and, outside of Taiwan, Japan is the only other nation where similar electoral guidelines are in place (Nathan,

425). The SVMM system encourages candidates with relatively small constituencies to run for office since, the more candidates that run, the less votes are needed to win. This means that a candidate with a small, but loyal support base could easily win office, as long as his opponents were numerous enough to split the undecided vote. This environment was fertile ground for small parties and independents who could win election through careful electoral strategizing rather than widespread support (Nathan, 427). Therefore, when the 2004 Legislative Yuan amendments altered this system, smaller political actors found it much more difficult to gain representation and most were all but eliminated.

The question then arises as to why the KMT would put these sorts of electoral rules into place. At the time of the Legislative Yuan's electoral system establishment the KMT were by far the majority party and had near total control of the process. According to both Kenneth Benoit and Charles Boix's theories on party systems and electoral system formation, majority parties should favor the establishment of plurality rules to reinforce their political control. The KMT, however, crafted a system which encouraged the formation and election of minority parties. On the surface this appears counter-productive to the KMT's goals, however, closer examination reveals it to be a well-calculated political maneuver. Since the more candidates that participated in a given election, the less votes were needed to win, this system benefited the KMT by dividing the opposition. Rather than facing a coherent, well organized opposition party, this system allowed the KMT to pit their well-funded and experienced members against a slew of independents and smaller party candidates. This strategy kept the opposition divided and the KMT in charge.

More than a decade later, changing circumstances in the political environment made the same special features of this system, which had once benefited the KMT, detrimental to its

interests. As discussed in detail later in this thesis, the KMT began to face serious problems with factionalization and loss of party discipline in the late 1990's. KMT candidates would often run in elections without the consent of party leadership and would often actively work against other KMT factions in their region (Roy, 2005). Since the SVMM system required excellent planning and organization in order to win elections, these issues began to cause serious problems for the KMT. Too many KMT candidates would appear on ballots, divide the vote, and allow the opposition to take advantage of the same strategy originally developed by the KMT. As a result, the latter half of the 1990's saw a series of losses for the KMT which eventually culminated in their highly disappointing performance in the 2001 Legislative Yuan elections.

The 2001 elections saw a great strengthening of the newly organized PFP, almost exclusively at the expense of the KMT (Copper 2013, 60). At this time it is useful to again consider Kenneth Benoit and Charles Boix's theory on electoral system choice. According to this theoretical framework, shifts towards PR systems should be undertaken when the political power balance changes and minority parties gain power. Therefore, after the 2001 Legislative Yuan elections, when both the PFP and the TSU were strengthened, the electoral system should have shifted towards PR and solidified their positions. While the proportion of Legislative Yuan seats filled from a proportional slate did increase, these parties were nevertheless hedged out of power as a result of the reforms.

The discrepancy between the theory and actual unfolding of events again lies in the particularities of the previous Legislative Yuan electoral rules. The SVMM system was so conducive to minority party interests, that a shift towards parallel voting actually hurt these parties rather than helping them. Therefore, in this particular event, the inability to apply the prevailing theory on party and electoral system formation was not an inherent failure of the



theory itself. Rather, the discrepancy was due to the uniqueness of Taiwan's electoral system and lack of scholarship on how it may fit into the existing theoretical framework.

Examples of political phenomenon that are largely unexplainable with common party and electoral system theory are surprisingly common in Taiwan. One further one which merits mentioning is the issue of district magnitude and number of political parties. According to Kenneth Benoit's 2001 article "District Magnitude, Electoral Formula, and Number of Parties," larger district magnitudes under PR systems should lead to greater numbers of political parties. Conversely, under plurality rules, larger district magnitudes should lead to a smaller number of parties (District magnitude, 204). For most of the 1990's both Taiwan's Legislative Yuan and its National Assembly elected a majority of their members through plurality rules and a smaller proportion through PR. Additionally, both of these bodies had somewhat large district magnitudes in their electoral system. According to Benoit's theory, these factors should have yielded a smaller number of political parties. In reality however, there were so many parties under the system in the 1990's that many suggested that a multi-party system was taking shape in Taiwan.

Much of the disconnect between theory and actuality is related to the nation's highly mixed and somewhat distinct electoral rules. Most of the top governing bodies in Taiwan maintain mixed electoral systems with a majority of seats being chosen through plurality rules and a significant minority from PR slates. Since a majority of the scholarship on party and electoral system relations include plurality rules vs proportional representation as key determining variables, it is difficult to adapt these concepts accurately to Taiwan's situation. Additionally, as previously discussed with the case of the Legislative Yuan and SVMM system, much of Taiwan's electoral system is not only mixed, but also highly unique. Upon closer

analysis it appears that many of Taiwan's electoral guidelines may be intentionally confusing or vague. While this may be more speculation than solid scholarship, it is interesting to note that intentional muddling of political rules would be consistent with expectations from a system established by an authoritarian regime. Taiwan's system requires extensive electoral strategizing to win elections. As such, it would have behooved the KMT to establish a system with complex and difficult to understand electoral guidelines. This would cripple their opponents' ability to strategize effectively, and give the KMT the advantage of maneuvering in a system only they fully understood.

### **1991 National Assembly Election**

The democractization of Taiwan began with the unraveling of the National Assembly. By the late 1980's, the Republic of China's National Assembly was more than a rubber stamp organ of the KMT regime. The National Assembly was a symbol, embodying the outdated, ineffectual, and even comical nature of Taiwan's political system. Politicians so old that they had to be physically wheeled into the assembly chamber and accompanied by nurses made up a majority of one of the nation's highest governing bodies. The National Assembly's evolution and about-face shift from this decrepit state are analogous with the KMT's own transformation from a stateless dictatorship in exile, to a truly formidable political force. The story of the National Assembly also presents a key example of the KMT's remarkable ability to evolve and adapt. Skillfully guiding the National Assembly's transformation into a democratically elected body allowed the KMT to increase their legitimacy domestically and abroad, while at the same time shaping a system that would ensure their dominance into the foreseeable future.

The first National Assembly of the ROC was elected in 1947 when the KMT was still in control of the Chinese mainland. It was designed to represent all of China and therefore had representatives elected from each province controlled by the KMT at the time. This meant that the Assembly was, by its nature, a huge body that boasted more than 3000 members (Chira). It also meant that the National Assembly was an important political symbol of the ROC's claim to the Chinese mainland after its retreat to Taiwan in 1949. To preserve this claim, the ROC leadership froze all elections for the National Assembly until the KMT had retaken the Chinese mainland from the Communists.

Over time, as it became clear that the ROC's stay in Taiwan would not be a temporary situation, the National Assembly's structure and membership became an increasingly large political burden. Almost the entirety of its membership represented areas that were outside of the ROC's control. These individuals were paid the equivalent of more than 8,300 U.S. dollars per month as well as free housing (Yates). As the 1980's drew to a close, the illegitimacy of the National Assembly members' positions was compounded by the fact that most of them were far too old to be making any real contributions to the Taiwanese political system.

By 1990, the size of the National Assembly had shrunk to 715 members. 84 of these seats were filled by members elected in Taiwan through supplementary elections, usually after the previous representative had died of old age. Of the 631 other members of the assembly the average age was over 80 years old (Yates). The majority of these individuals were in poor health and had to be wheeled into the Assembly chamber by nurses. In 1988 one member died of a heart-attack as he was speaking to the assembly (Chira). Another 82 year-old member died of heart failure after being harassed by demonstrators protesting the situation in the assembly

(Yates). It became commonplace for aging members to be wheeled out by nurses after being shaken by conflict in the assembly.

Despite the increasingly ludicrous nature of the situation, removing the elderly assembly members from office was politically difficult for KMT leadership. Abolishing these positions would be a symbolic acceptance of the ROC's permanent exile to Taiwan and run contrary to the KMT's One-China principal. Strangely enough, this controversy highlighted commonalities in KMT and CCP policy towards Taiwan. Both parties were aligned in their view of Taiwan as a province within the greater Chinese nation. Therefore, on issues such as Taiwanese independence, the KMT and CCP could conceivably agree and cooperate to a certain degree. This would later become a key underlying issue in Taiwanese politics as democratic elections allowed individuals who opposed this policy to gain political power.

By the late 1980's more liberal KMT leadership under president Lee Teng-hui decided that resolving the embarrassing situation in the National Assembly would be worth the loss of this political capital. ROC leadership offered generous pensions and benefits for the aging assembly members to step down. Almost all refused and it became clear that more decisive action would need to be taken before the situation could be resolved.

The December 1991 National Assembly election was arguably one of the first and most significant democratic elections in Taiwanese history. Taiwan scholar and neutral observer in the 1991 elections, June Teufel Dreyer, commented that the election's significance did not lie solely in its effect on later political events but rather in its role as a culmination of events preceding it (Dreyer, 67). In a 1992 World Affairs article, Dreyer implies that without a combination of increasingly bold behavior by conservative KMT members, political

mobilization and protest by Taiwanese youth, and deft political maneuvering by KMT presidential incumbent Lee Teng-hui, the 1991 election would likely have occurred under somewhat different circumstances, or possibly have not taken place at all (Dreyer, 67). Additionally, this election and the events preceding it serve as a key example in which the ROC political party system shaped the electoral system.

Prior to 1990 KMT reformist and conservative factions had been in somewhat of a stalemate regarding the state of the National Assembly. Conservative KMT members constantly worked to preserve the status quo and blocked their more liberal counterparts from initiating reforms within the assembly (Dreyer, 67). Then in early 1990, circumstances changed when conservative KMT members made an unexpected vie for political control. KMT presidential incumbent Lee Teng-hui was expected to run unopposed in the 1990 presidential election, but instead was challenged by an opposition slate put together by elderly KMT conservatives. The KMT conservatives simultaneously announced their intent to make the National Assembly an upper house of Parliament with the ability to veto legislation. Additionally, National Assembly members, who most Taiwanese already considered overpaid, would receive a quadrupled stipend for their new responsibilities (Dreyer, 67).

These actions sparked outrage in much of the Taiwanese population and resulted in large scale protests in March of 1990 outside the Chiang Kai-shek Memorial in Taipei. The protesters demanded sweeping political reforms which they contended were long overdue. Presidential incumbent Lee Teng-hui responded by stating that he was sympathetic to the protesters' goals and would study the proposed reforms at the next government meeting (Roy, 190). At the National Affairs Conference of June 1990 the proposed reforms were indeed brought forward and a significant portion was agreed upon; including:

“(1) all seats in the National Assembly and Legislative Yuan should be opened to competitive elections; (2) the ROC president, the governor of Taiwan, and the mayors of Taipei and Kaohsiung should be popularly elected; (3) the special powers vested in the government due to the ‘communist rebellion’ should be discontinued; and (4) the people of Taiwan rather than the people of Mainland China should be the government’s primary concern” (Roy, 191).

Although previous nationwide elections had taken place, they were never more than supplementary elections to replace elderly KMT members who had either died or retired. These elderly mainlanders were notorious for being both long lived and unwilling to retire from political office. This ensured that previous supplementary elections were incapable of effecting any real or direct changes in the Taiwanese political arena. In 1990 the majority of National Assembly members elected in 1947 were still in office. These individuals were highly unpopular due to their large and growing disconnect with the Taiwanese people and the current political realities in Taiwan (Dreyer, 67). Older mainland-elected KMT politicians were so resented in fact that they were commonly referred to among the Taiwanese people as “old thieves” (老贼) and were physically attacked by both opposition politicians and protesters (Yates).

Under growing pressure from the Taiwanese people as well as many younger KMT members, the ROC Supreme Court, known as the Council of Grand Justices, ruled in June of 1990 that all of the National Assembly members elected in the 1947 election must leave office by the end of 1991 (Dreyer, 67). They subsequently chose December 21<sup>st</sup> of that year as the date for the new National Assembly elections. The Council then initiated a much needed restructuring of the National Assembly, which at the time was still organized in a manner designed to govern all of Mainland China. While these reforms were widely recognized as

necessary, they were highly contested by the opposition DPP who objected to the KMT's hegemonic role in the process (Roy, 191).

As the majority party the KMT had near complete control of the restructuring of the National Assembly. This meant that the electoral rules under which the December 1991 election was to occur would almost certainly be designed to put the KMT at an advantage vis-à-vis the opposition DPP. By restructuring the National Assembly in this manner, the KMT worked to ensure that they would retain the bulk of their political power after Taiwan's first full nationwide election. This effect was twofold, as it would not only allow the KMT to maintain control of Taiwan's highest governing bodies, but also to control the process of constitutional revision, which was to be one of the first duties of the newly elected 2<sup>nd</sup> National Assembly. This meant that the December 1991 National Assembly election would be crucial to the future of the Taiwanese democratic system. Whichever party could win the election and emerge dominant in the National Assembly would effectively have the power to shape the ROC constitution and bend electoral rules in their favor (Dreyer, 68).

The opposition DPP began the election at a disadvantage due to a lack of resources and the need to work within the KMT designed electoral system. As such, their goal was simply to gain enough seats in the National Assembly to block undesirable KMT action, while the KMT's goal was to gain enough seats to legislate unhindered by DPP objections. The KMT needed  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the National Assembly seats in order to control the constitution writing process. Conversely, the DPP needed more than  $\frac{1}{4}$  in order to influence the process and block proposed KMT changes that they did not approve of (Dreyer, 68).

The newly restructured National Assembly had a total of 409 seats, 84 of which had been filled in a 1986 election and therefore were not up for reelection in 1991. It is interesting to note that the DPP was technically still illegal at the time of the 1986 supplementary election, as the martial law imposed ban on opposition parties had not yet been lifted (Roy, 171). This put the fledgling party at a huge disadvantage in the 1986 election and ensured that the majority of seats filled in that election were given to the KMT. This left 325 seats up for election in December 1991, which were further divided into 225 seats elected from 58 multi-member single vote districts, and 100 seats which would be allotted to each party according to their share of the total vote (Dreyer, 68).

Most Taiwan scholars agree that the majority of these new electoral laws had been crafted by the KMT to maximize their performance in the elections. In the years prior to the election the KMT had done extensive research into their electoral performance at the smaller scale and supplementary elections across Taiwan. This research showed that the KMT usually fared better within smaller election districts (Dreyer, 68). In these districts the KMT could take advantage of their more widespread influence to field personable, locally known, candidates on the KMT ticket. In her 1992 article June Dreyer points out that, while this strategy may prove useful to the KMT in the immediate future, it could end up causing them problems in long term. Since the local electorates were more loyal to a specific candidate, rather than the KMT as an organization, this created greater potential for factionalization within the KMT (Dreyer, 68). This observation proved to be surprisingly prophetic as this is exactly what happened in the period between 1996 and 2000, eventually allowing the DPP to win the 2000 presidential election.



Controversy also existed over the proportionally appointed portion of the seats. According to the new electoral guidelines, each voter was to cast one vote, which would count towards both the directly elected and the proportionally appointed seats. The DPP alleged that this was tantamount to having a single ballot count for one party twice. They reasoned that this put them at a disadvantage since many voters would prefer to vote for their locally known KMT candidate, but may disagree with general KMT party policy and so would choose to vote for the DPP in the proportional election (Dreyer, 68).

This new set of electoral laws is a clear example of the influence political parties have on electoral system formation. To a certain degree the situation runs counter to Maurice Duverger's famous hypothesis which implies that party systems are formed by electoral systems, and supports Kenneth Benoit's hypothesis that electoral systems can also be shaped by party systems (Benoit, 363). The circumstances surrounding this election can be described as a political party deliberately creating an electoral system, expecting that it will in turn reinforce the type of party system that they desire. This adheres to Benoit's assertion that political party systems and electoral systems tend to have an endogenous relationship (Benoit, 363).

Despite its many disadvantages, most expected the DPP to perform well in the 1991 National Assembly elections. At the time of the 1989 supplementary Legislative Yuan elections the DPP was still a relatively new and inexperienced party, yet it won more than 31 percent of the vote (Dreyer, 68). Most observers felt that the DPP had made significant gains in electoral experience, party organization, and political reputation since this time and therefore would perform better in the 1991 elections. DPP leaders were even confident enough to announce publically that they expected to receive 40 to 50 percent of the vote (Dreyer, 68). The results of

the election proved all of these assumptions incorrect as the DPP won less than a quarter of the open seats, while the KMT won more than 71 percent (Roy, 193).

There are several theories as to why the DPP preformed so poorly in the 1991 election which tend to vary greatly based on the political alignment of the source. One of the most prevalent lines of reasoning is that DPP candidates overemphasized the independence issue and frightened potential voters. The highly vocal support for independence by DPP candidates indicated an inherently hostile position vis-à-vis mainland China, who had explicitly stated their intent to invade Taiwan if independence was declared (Roy, 193). Another possibility is that the workings of the new electoral structure put the DPP at a disadvantage from the beginning. This position tends to be emphasized by DPP supporters and has some degree of factual support. As previously discussed, the electoral system under which the 1991 elections had taken place was designed entirely by the KMT. The DPP had highly objected to this system since its inception and even seriously considered boycotting the 1991 election in protest (Dreyer, 68). Both of these theories have merit and it seems likely some combination of these two factors that played the determining role in the outcome of the 1991 elections.

### **1996 Presidential Election**

The 1996 Presidential Election is often pointed to as the most significant in Taiwanese history. The election represented the culmination of the KMT's efforts to democratize Taiwan while maintaining political control. The establishment of a directly elected presidency would make it increasingly difficult for critics of the KMT to argue that Taiwan was simply a façade democracy designed to protect the party's interests. It also meant that the KMT would have to rely on more than clever manipulation of the electoral system to maintain its political hegemony.

Despite ironic and unintended aid from the PRC in KMT's the 1996 electoral victory, the election would mark the beginning of fundamental problems with the KMT party organization. These issues would eventually present yet another opportunity for the party to prove its resilience and adaptability in the face of adversity.

The 1996 presidential election was the first time in Taiwanese history that the leader of the nation would be directly democratically elected. Additionally, the election was an important step in further shifting the country towards a presidential system. Previously, although Taiwan had formally been a semi-presidential system, the president was chosen by the National Assembly. This had left the country leaning in the direction of a parliamentary system, since the president was put in place by the chief legislative body. With a direct presidential election, however, the National Assembly lost a good deal of its influence over the president and the considerable powers he wielded.

In 1966 the National Assembly had assigned further powers to the president. These included extended emergency powers and the power to create a National Security Council (Copper, 95). At the time these increased presidential powers also increased the power of the National Assembly since they were the ones who selected both the president and vice-president. The newly independent presidential office was now free of this tie and could exercise these powers largely free of National Assembly influence. These changes placed the president as one of the single most powerful and influential figures in the Taiwanese political arena.

Factionalization within the KMT played an important role in the lead up to the 1996 election. Two high-ranking former KMT officials, former Taiwan governor Lin Yang-kang, and Control Yuan president Chen Li-an ran against incumbent Lee Teng-hui (Roy, 1999). Many

anticipated that this would split the KMT vote and would both lead to a close election and increase the chances of a DPP victory. Lin and Chen represented somewhat more conservative political factions than Lee Teng-hui and both aimed at improving relations with mainland China. Lin went one step further and, in addition to strongly supporting the One-China policy, demanded and greater political and economic ties to the PRC (Roy, 199).

By the time the campaigning began for the 1996 Presidential Election it had become clear that Lee Teng-hui was an advocate of Taiwan's de facto independence from mainland China. This, coupled with the unsettling democratic precedent that the ROC was setting with its first presidential election, greatly worried PRC leadership. They responded with a massive smear campaign against Lee Teng-hui which attempted to paint him as a traitor and a danger to the fragile peace between Taiwan and the mainland. Additionally, as the election time drew closer Beijing launched a series of missile tests into the Taiwan strait in an attempt to dissuade Taiwanese voters from electing Lee Teng-hui (Roy, 199). These clearly threatening gestures of force made the threat of armed conflict with the PRC seem like a more real possibility than it had for most of the ROC's time on Taiwan. It also evoked a military reaction from the U.S. who, according to the 1979 Taiwan Relations Act, had a vague commitment to protect Taiwan from PRC military force (Roy, 200).

Ironically, the PRC's reaction to the situation was a significant contributing factor in Lee Teng-hui's overwhelming victory in the 1996 presidential race. Rather than being intimidated by the missile tests, Taiwanese voters were outraged that Beijing would attempt to use the threat of violence to influence the election (Copper, 116). Both Lin and Chen had publically agreed with Beijing's accusations that Lee Teng-hui and his pro-independence plots were the cause of the current conflict in the Taiwan Strait. Additionally, Lin and his running mate had condemned the

U.S. military intervention in Chinese affairs (Roy, 201). These factors caused many Taiwanese to believe that Lin and Chen were pro-Beijing and therefore associate them with the recent PRC aggression.

As a result of increased Taiwanese patriotic sentiment, many of the effects of KMT factionalization were nullified in the 1996 election. Voters rallied behind Lee Teng-hui and gave him a landslide victory with 54 percent of the votes cast. This was more than double the number of votes received by the second highest candidate, the DPP's Peng Ming-min, at just over 21 percent. It was also more than the combined votes received by all three of the other candidates (Copper, 118). The resounding effect of this lessening of KMT factionalization is particularly interesting to note in comparison to the next presidential election in 2000, when split KMT voting is thought to have significantly contributed to the DPP's victory.

Perhaps the greatest factor in Lee Teng-hui's victory was the simple fact of his incumbency. Lee had held the office of president for 6 years and had overseen a period of great political liberalization and economic development in Taiwan. Economic stability, peace, and continued de facto independence from the PRC were all seen to be solid bets under the Lee campaign (Copper, 119-120). In comparison, the DPP had fielded a candidate who had little political experience and had been living abroad for the past several years. The candidate, Peng Ming-min, therefore lacked a solid voter base and appeared a dangerous choice due to his inexperience, especially in light of the recent rise in tensions across the Taiwan Strait (Copper, 119).

The conclusion of the 1996 presidential election was an important watershed in Taiwanese political history for several reasons. First, it marked the consolidation of Taiwan's

democracy and solidified its position vis-à-vis mainland China. The election was widely hailed by the international community as a victory for democracy in Asia and presented a favorable image of Taiwan to many world powers, including the United States. It would now be exceedingly difficult for the PRC to justify the military conquest of the small democratic nation by an authoritarian power. This gave at least a temporary guarantee of Taiwan's de facto independence for some time to come. Additionally, the election embodied the playing out of many important themes that would influence future Taiwanese elections. Among these were the importance of party factionalization in electoral outcomes, the advantages for the KMT in its history of promoting political and economic stability, and the importance of relative moderation on the issue of Taiwanese independence.

### **2000 Presidential Election and DPP Rule**

Following their 1996 Presidential election victory, the KMT faced a series of problems that hurt the party's image, weakened its political structure, and ultimately ended up costing them the presidency. Among these, the two most widely accepted factors behind the KMT's loss were pervasive corruption, and high levels of factionalization and infighting within the party. These, coupled with an unusually united DPP and the emergence of a skilled opposition candidate, sealed the KMT's fate for the election ahead.

As increasing numbers of young Taiwanese joined the KMT, party discipline and centralization began to see noticeable decline. Democratization caused local KMT factions to be more relevant and enjoy greater levels of autonomy. Since these groups knew more about local conditions and were more capable of winning elections, the central KMT organization in Taipei had little choice but to turn over control of local affairs to them. As a result, these groups were

apt to disregard direction from KMT leadership, field candidates not officially endorsed by the KMT, and support positions that ran counter to party line (Roy, 205). To make matters worse, elements of traditional Taiwanese culture such as clientelism and gift-giving, began to translate into widespread vote-buying practices by KMT candidates. Not only did this practice damage the KMT's image and legitimacy, but it also placed a large financial strain on the party. Candidates often spent millions of dollars on campaigns, much of which went to cover the costs of gifts, favors, and ballot purchases (Roy, 205).

Corruption also became widespread during this period as the KMT became increasingly reliant on organized crime groups to ensure electoral victories. Gangs would use their influence to secure the vote of certain groups and areas for a particular candidate. After the election, the candidate would then repay the gangs either through direct financial compensation, or preferential treatment of gang-owned businesses (Roy, 206). Graft was commonplace and many public works projects suffered as a result. "Black gold" (黑金) became a common colloquial expression used to refer to corrupt politics, graft, and organized crime. Corruption became so engrained in the basic KMT party structure that it became apparent to many Taiwanese that the KMT was becoming increasingly incapable of effectively fighting organized crime. By prosecuting gang leaders the KMT would be undercutting key sectors of their own support base and damaging their ability to win elections. This situation damaged both the effective functioning of the KMT party machine, and the party's image among the Taiwanese people.

KMT party discipline and organization also began to decline in the late 1990's. Party leaders increasingly fought against one another and local KMT factions often entered into violent clashes with each other (Roy, 206). As the 1990's drew to a close this situation grew

increasingly worse and eventually culminated in the disastrous 2000 election voting split between James Soong and Lien Chan.

James Soong was both a popular and highly qualified candidate for the presidency. He held a PhD from Georgetown University, had a long record of experience in political office, and was the first elected governor of Taiwan (Copper 2013, 58). Soong was also much more popular among the Taiwanese people than Lee Teng-hui's chosen successor Lien Chan. Lien Chan had similar political qualifications to Soong, but was seen as somewhat detached from the Taiwanese people, which cost him greatly in the opinion polls. Despite this, incumbent president Lee Teng-hui was insistent that Lien Chan receive the KMT nomination for president over James Soong. Soong was outraged and decided to run as an independent in the 2000 election. This led to Soong's ejection from the KMT and an inevitable split in the KMT vote (Copper 2013, 58).

At the beginning of the 2000 presidential election James Soong was much farther ahead in the polls than either Lien Chan or DPP candidate Chen Shui-bian. It seemed apparent at this time that Soong would easily defeat both of his opponents and claim the presidency despite his status as an independent candidate. However, a scandal emerged near election time that badly damaged Soong's image and position vis-à-vis Lien Chan and Chen. KMT members began publically accusing Soong of funneling party funds into his and his relatives' bank accounts during his term as KMT secretary general. This severely hindered Soong's campaign, much of which had been based on his image as a clean politician and ability to fight corruption. The charges against Soong were later dropped but the damage was already done (Copper 2013, 58).

Yoshiyuki Ogasawara of Tokyo Foreign Studies University provides an interesting Chinese language assessment of James Soong's 2000 presidential candidacy and its implications.



The work, whose title can be translated as “A Study of the 2000 Taiwan Presidential Election’s James Soong Phenomenon”, analyses why James Soong lost the election despite high levels of popular support. Ogasawara contends that, without a strong political party structure to support him, Soong was at a grievous disadvantage in the elections. According to Ogasawara, this factor more than any other ultimately made James Soong unelectable despite high levels of popular support (Ogasawara).

Ogasawara’s assertion highlights several interesting facets of Taiwan’s party and electoral systems. First, the party system is an inseparable part of the Taiwanese electoral process. Without party participation it is essentially impossible for an individual to gain significant political power in Taiwan. This is a fairly common feature of democratic systems and, on the surface, is a mundane phenomenon. What is more interesting is what the ‘James Soong Phenomenon’ illustrates in the story of KMT party and electoral system manipulation. By the end of the 1990’s the KMT had established party and electoral systems that guaranteed their dominant role in the political process. Despite serious issues of inter-party conflict, loss of party discipline, and corruption, KMT party support remained the decisive factor in the outcome of the election. This carried important implications for events following the 2000 election. The KMT’s entrenchment ensured that the KMT could return to its dominant position after the reestablishment of party discipline.

In contrast to KMT party infighting, the DPP was unusually united in the 2000 election campaign. They had learned from many years of struggling as an opposition party the value of cohesiveness in campaigning season. Additionally, they had learned the political necessity of moderating some of their more controversial positions, especially those concerning Taiwan-China relations. In mid-1999 the DPP passed a resolution accepting the status-quo of Taiwan-

China relations on the grounds that Taiwan already enjoyed de-facto independence and therefore had no need to declare formal independence at the time (Roy, 228). While a small radical minority of Taiwanese independence activists were upset by this position, it was widely well received by the majority of the Taiwanese population. This established the DPP as a more moderate party with a much cleaner image than the rival KMT.

The DPP was also aided significantly by the campaigning skill of their chosen candidate, Chen Shui-bian. Chen was different from the other candidates in a variety of ways. Both Lien Chan and James Soong had extensive governing experience within the KMT and had both held several high ranking national government positions. By comparison, the highest office Chen Shui-bian could claim was mayor of Taipei, an office which he lost to KMT candidate Ma Ying-jeou. Additionally, Chen differed from his opponents in his relative youth and poor family background (Copper, 58). Despite frequent criticism on these topics by opponents, Chen was deftly able to portray these apparent disadvantages to the public in a way that bolstered his image among the people. He presented his upbringing in a poor rural village in southern Taiwan as proof that he was a man of the people who was sensitive to their needs, rather than the desires of the political elite in Taipei. His youth and lack of governing experience relative to his opponents allowed him to convincingly claim that he would present a clean break with the old KMT style of government, which had gained an increasing bad reputation as corrupt and stagnant.

Many of Chen's campaigning strategies are exemplified in one of his campaign ads for the 2000 presidential election. The content is clearly aimed at evoking a sense of Taiwanese nationalism in viewers. The images depict the lives of everyday lower-middle class Taiwanese and are accompanied by a narration in which Chen describes their desire for peace and a simple life. In the narration he specifically states that "[These] Taiwanese are not as complicated as the

foreign world. They have never contemplated putting their money overseas.” This is somewhat of an overt appeal to Taiwanese nationalism and a statement against closer economic ties with mainland China. It is interesting to note this position in particular, as many of Chen’s later policies would substantially increase Taiwan’s economic ties with the PRC (Chen, 2006).

The ad then proceeds with Chen narrating that “They [the common Taiwanese] want a stable life, not war.” This emphasis on peace continues for the remainder of the ad, as the phrase “Peaceful Taiwan” is repeated over and over. This focus is likely a response to common feelings that the DPP was too radical of a party and would instigate a war with China by declaring independence. Sentiment of this sort had played a key role in the DPP’s defeat in the 1996 presidential election and Chen Shui-bian was likely trying to counter these notions here (Chen, 2006).

PRC leaders attempts to influence the 2000 presidential election again backfired and helped sure up the vote for their least desired candidate. PRC media outlets and political leaders, including the premier, issued cutting criticisms of Chen Shui-bian and implied that a victory for the DPP candidate could lead to war (Copper, 59). This had the effect of inciting many Taiwanese voters who wanted to prove that the PRC could not diminish their democratic rights through threats of armed violence.

When the final vote was tallied Chen Shui-bian won with 39.3 percent, while James Soong and Lien Chan received 36.8 percent and 23 percent respectively (Roy, 230). Despite all of the factors in his favor Chen Shui-bian had only won by the narrow margin of two percent. It was clear to most that without the KMT’s negative campaigning against James Soong he would have won the election handily. Lien Chan’s embarrassing 23 percent temporarily ended his

sponsor Lee Teng-hui's political career. Upon the announcement of the election results, a massive crowd, which grew to several thousand, gathered in front of the KMT's main party building in Taipei and protested until Lee Teng-hui agreed to step down as KMT party chairman. On the same day that Lee Teng-hui stepped down, James Soong formed the Peoples First Party (PFP) and signaled a permanent split of the KMT voting bloc (Roy, 231). Despite these setbacks the KMT was far from defeated and would go on to serve as a powerful opposition force for the next eight years of Chen Shui-bian's presidency.

### **The Chen administration and the 2008 Return of the KMT**

Chen Shui-bian's government experienced serious problems throughout his time in office, many of which began almost immediately after his inauguration and intensified over time. Chief among these were Chen's weak mandate for rule, Taiwan's stagnating economy, growing corruption among government officials, and strained relations with both the U.S. and the PRC. While Chen Shui-bian was able to weather the 2004 presidential reelection, the circumstances of his victory were questionable and led to a further decline in his image both in Taiwan and abroad. The combination of these factors lead to the overwhelming defeat of the DPP in the 2008 presidential election and the return of the KMT as the governing power in Taiwan.

As previously discussed, Chen Shui-bian had won the 2000 election by only a slim margin of the vote and was significantly aided by a series of fortunate events preceding the election. While he had the presidency, he had a weak mandate and little control of the government beyond the executive office. The KMT was in control of the Legislative Yuan and an overwhelming majority of the government bureaucracy were KMT affiliated (Roy, 232). This left the Chen in a weak position and made it highly difficult to pass any sort of legislation

without making significant concessions to the KMT opposition. As a result, Chen was able to deliver on very few of his original campaign promises. Over time this began to anger the DPP and many other of his former supporters. One DPP affiliated group issued a report publically criticizing him for his ineffectuality as early as August of 2000 (Roy, 232). Internal opposition to Chen and his policies began to drive a wedge in the DPP camp between Chen supporters and those who favored a more assertive stance against the KMT and China. This divide eventually became so bad that before the end of Chen's presidency in 2008 former DPP chairman Shih Ming-teh launched a massive anti-Chen campaign. Over a million Taiwanese participated in several of his rallies, most of whom were DPP supporters against Chen and his policies (Copper, 61).

The Taiwanese economy also fared badly under the Chen administration. By the second year of Chen Shui-bian's presidency the economy had seen negative growth of more than two percent of gross national product (GNP), currency had devalued by 10 percent, and the stock market had fallen by more than 40 percent (Democracy on Trial, 77). Most Taiwanese had spent the majority of their lives under the prosperous economic conditions that the KMT regime had overseen. To them, these economic hardships were a new phenomenon and could only be attributed to Chen Shui-bian's poor handling of the economy. Chen and his supporters argued that the opposition KMT was deliberately taking action to damage the economy and discredit his leadership (Democracy on Trial, 38). KMT affiliated individuals did indeed have a controlling hand in Taiwan's stock market and its private sector, and as such were hypothetically capable of taking such action. It is, however, still a matter of some debate as to whether these individuals would willingly do so much damage to their economic interests in order to delegitimize the Chen administration.

Lee Teng-hui reemerged onto the political scene in 2001 to assist the beleaguered Chen administration combat KMT attempts at strengthening cross-strait relations with China. He formed the Taiwan Solidarity Union (TSU) to draw in disaffected politicians who supported the DPP's position on Taiwanese sovereignty but were more conservative on social and economic issues. This effectively created what came to be known as the pan-green camp, with the DPP and TSU working together to counter the pan-blue camp of the KMT and PFP. This dynamic is interesting to note as it places the status of Taiwan's party system in somewhat of a grey area. While both the TSU and the PFP are important to the relative political power of the DPP and KMT, they have little power on their own. The two auxiliary parties function largely to support and influence their corresponding larger party. This indicates that, despite the involvement of multiple relevant political parties, Taiwan is still by and large a two-party system.

Lee Teng-hui and the TSU bolstered Chen's support before the 2004 reelection. Despite this, most observers predicted that Chen would lose the election to the powerful team of Lien Chan and James Soong, who had united to run against him (Copper, 60). With the heads of both the KMT and PFP appearing on one ticket there would be no splitting of the pan-blue camp vote in the 2004 election. Additionally, both candidates had extensive experience governing during the period of Taiwan's economic miracle. This contrasted strongly with the poor performance of the economy under Chen Shui-bian's administration.

The 2004 presidential debate was the first in Taiwanese history. It presented an excellent example of both sides' campaign strategies and, in a larger sense, the strategies of the pan-green and pan-blue camps. Chen Shui-bian largely emphasized social issues and attempted to evoke Taiwanese nationalist sentiments. Lien Chan, on the other hand, focused on economic issues and gave his positions a much more international focus (Gtwisp, 2012).

Language played an important symbolic role in the 2004 presidential debate. Although the debate was conducted largely in the official language of standard Mandarin Chinese, both sides utilized other dialects in their speeches to attempt to broaden their support base. This was especially important for the Chen Shui-bian and the DPP. Both candidates spoke at some point in the Taiwanese Hokkien dialect, however, Chen Shui-bian emphasized the language and used it at several points in the debate. He also spoke in the Hakka dialect and used Hakka folk sayings to illustrate his points. In the question and answer segment, the first question Chen asks Lien Chan is: “In the short time since I took office we have established the first Council for Hakka Affairs, Hakka television station, and Hakka research institute to help the Hakka people. Why did you never do this?” Both of these strategies are consistent with Chen and the DPP’s plays on ethnic sentiments throughout the campaign. The DPP recognized that it was unlikely to garner much of the mainlander vote and instead tried to position itself as the defender of ethnic Taiwanese and minority rights. From an electoral perspective this was a viable strategy, since approximately 70 percent of the Taiwanese population was comprised of non-mainlander ethnic groups.

Chen Shui-bian’s second central talking point was the KMT’s record of corruption. As previously discussed, the KMT had a bad reputation of corrupt activity by the end of the 1990’s which contributed to Chen Shui-bian’s victory in 2000. Chen utilized this reputation again in the 2004 debates, repeated connecting “black gold” (黑金) and the KMT. Near the opening of his speech Chen made several scathing attacks on the KMT: “Because of the obviousness of black gold, because of the uncaring KMT regime, because of unequal legislation, the roots of our country were constantly shaken...the KMT have continued to recklessly disregard the foundation of our nation.” Chen also made more direct attacks on his opponents, listing a host of famous

traitors and corrupt officials and saying that these were the people that stood beside Mr. Chan and Mr. Soong. He then concluded with the final condemnation: “There is no way we can trust these people. We want Taiwan to keep developing, but these people say one thing and do another.”

In contrast to Chen Shui-bian’s ethnic and moral appeals, Lien Chan chose to focus on economic performance and international relations in the 2004 presidential debate. Chan began by asking the audience to reframe their understanding of the issues: “We are not talking about personal taste...Let’s examine things from a macro perspective, look at things through the lens of history.” In essence, Lien Chan asked the listeners to not be swayed by Chen Shui-bian’s ethnic and emotional appeals, but rather to consider things from a practical standpoint. Chan followed this by asserting that the election is not about a specific candidate or party, but about a choice between two attitudes. To illustrate this point he referenced the reactions of China and Japan encountering the West 100 years ago. China reacted with the Boxer Rebellion, while Japan initiated the Meiji Restoration. As a consequence, China failed and Japan succeeded. The lesson that Lien Chan illustrates with this point is thick with powerful implications: “resistance led to subjugation, adaptation and reform led to success” (抗拒亡国，适应改变成功了). This is clearly an argument supporting focus on progress and development and a strong counter to Chen Shui-bian’s plays on nationalist and ethnic sentiment. It also has the more subtle function of supporting the KMT’s policy on cross-strait relations. By outright resistance, Taiwan would be subjugated just as the Boxers were. However, by maintaining open relations and learning from their opponent, Taiwan can become strong, just as the Japanese did.

Lien Chan emphasized the poor economic performance of the Chen administration as another key point. He asserted that under Chen, Taiwan had not kept up with globalization and



liberalization, had seen significant economic decline, and had been degraded in the eyes of many foreign nations. Lien Chan even went so far as to state that Chen Shui-bian's government had overseen failures of historical proportions stating: "The current administration has created many new Taiwanese miracles." These "miracles" were then described by Chan as economic disasters including the highest unemployment rate in Taiwanese history and a huge spike in the suicide and murder rates.

It is also interesting to note the fundamental difference in attitude towards globalization exhibited by Lien Chan and Chen Shui-bian. Chen's fundamental opposition to globalization is exhibited in both in this debate and in the 2000 campaign advertisement discussed previously. In the advertisement he specifically states "They [the Taiwanese people] have never thought of putting their money abroad." In the debate he constantly associates globalization with Taiwan's subjugation to China. Conversely, Lien Chan stressed the importance of strong international relations and globalization to Taiwan's development. He indicated that without a peaceful and safe international situation there was no way for Taiwan to progress.

The question and answer portion of the debate was perhaps even more telling of the DPP and KMT's electoral strategies. Chen Shui-bian constantly brought up ethnic issues and emphasized the ethnic divide in Taiwan. Lien Chan, on the other hand, played these issues down and chose instead to focus on specific economic and political policy issues. Chen countered nearly every criticism of his economic policies with accusations that Lien Chan was trying to sell out Taiwan to China. After several exchanges of this sort occurred, a pattern emerged which exemplified the respective parties key electoral strategies. Chen Shui-bian and the DPP attempted capitalize on ethnic divisions and fears that the KMT would submit Taiwan to PRC control. Lien Chan and the KMT attempted to focus voter attention on performance and

efficiency issues to portray themselves as the practical choice for Taiwan's growth and development. In essence, these were the same strategies that these parties had utilized since the beginnings of democracy in Taiwan with slight adjustments for current conditions.

The day before voting was to take place both Chen Shui-bian and his wife were shot and superficially wounded. Chen ordered the police and military to remain at their posts on election day, and prevented this sizeable group from voting. The majority of these individuals were KMT supporters and would likely have swung the election in the favor of the Lien-Soong ticket. This action allowed Chen Shui-bian to win the election by a narrow margin, and caused outrage among KMT supporters. Chen Shui-bian's already weak mandate was further diminished by these questionable circumstances, and his image was further damaged in Taiwan and abroad (Copper 2013, 60).

Chen Shui-bian faced a difficult situation in regards to cross-strait relations with China since his first day in office. China demanded Chen's commitment to the One-China principle as a precondition to resuming dialogue with the ROC. This left Chen with the difficult choice between exceedingly tense relations with the PRC or appearing hypocritical and alienating nearly his entire party and support base. Even DPP moderates, who were satisfied with de facto independence, would not be able to accept a president of their own party openly denouncing Taiwanese independence. Chen attempted to remedy this situation by make other concessions to Beijing, including several economic compromises loosening the restrictions of cross-strait trade and investment (Roy, 237). This caused Chen to draw sharp criticism from many DPP members who alleged that he was weakening Taiwan's position by making the island economically dependent on the mainland. It also did not have the desired effect on relations with the PRC, as CCP leaders continued to insist on political concessions as a prerequisite for dialogue (Roy, 237).

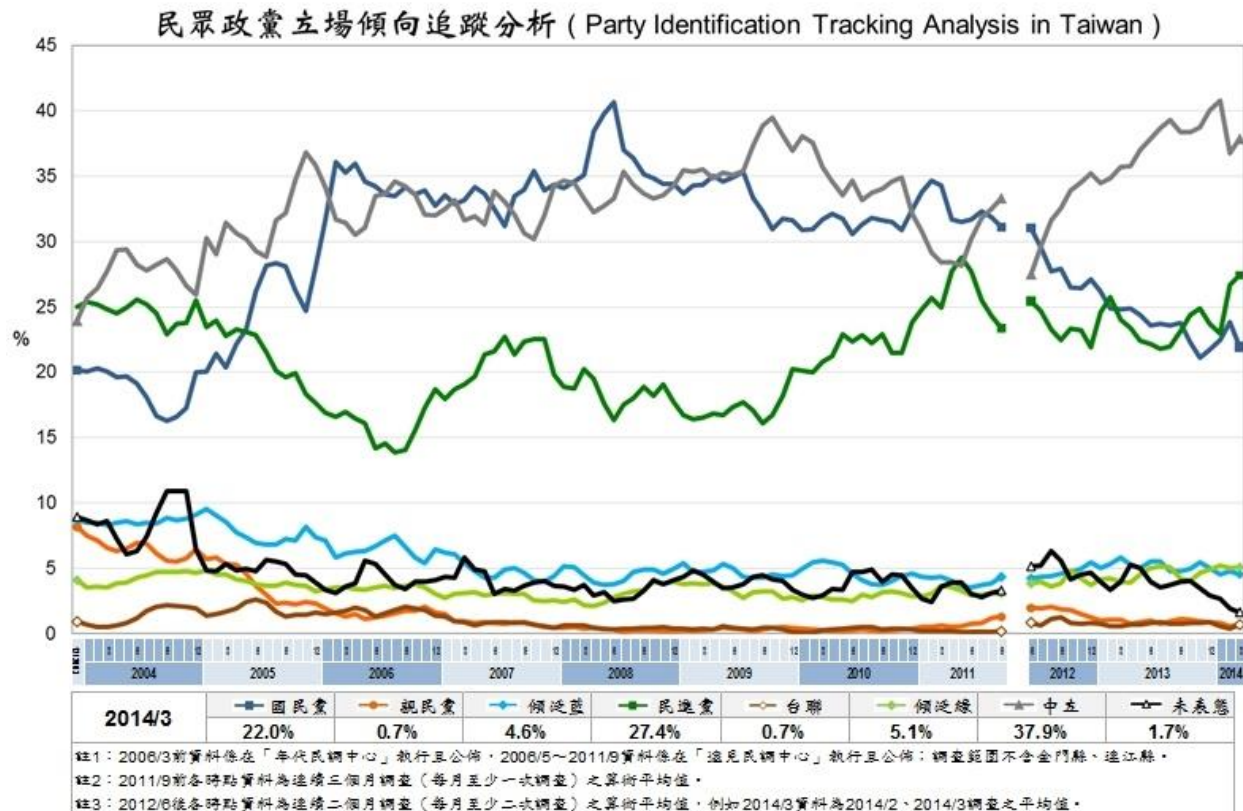
Relations continued to deteriorate as Chen's presidency wore on and his continued refusal to reaffirm the One-China policy, and actions such as attempting to join the United Nations agitated Beijing leadership.

Near the beginning of Chen Shui-bian's presidency relations with the United States were good. The Bush administration often praised democratic Taiwan and engaged in several arms sales to the island to increase its security. This support lessened over time following the September 11 bombings and the entry of the U.S. into the War on Terror. U.S. leadership began to resent the tense relations that Chen maintained with mainland China. There was constant worry in Washington that Chen's firm position on independence and actions taken to politically distance Taiwan from the mainland could draw the U.S. into a war with China. Eventually Chen came to be viewed as more of a liability than an asset. In 2006 U.S. leadership flew KMT presidential hopeful Ma Ying-jeou to Washington and feted him while Chen was denied transit through any major U.S. city (Democracy on Trial, 81).

Corruption was a persistent issue that both hobbled the Chen administration's governing effectiveness and ate away at its legitimacy. It would eventually prove to be the final nail in the coffin for the struggling administration. KMT corruption had been a key campaigning point for the DPP over the last decade and was a decisive factor in many of their electoral victories (Democracy on Trial, 61). This made growing corrupt practices under Chen Shui-bian appear especially heinous in the eyes of voters, and each new emerging scandal dealt a serious blow to the legitimacy of the administration. Between January and November of 2006 715 government officials were convicted of corruption charges (Democracy on Trial, 63). Over time, Chen Shui-bian's son, son-in-law, and wife were also alleged with having engaged in corrupt activity. After his wife was indicted, the prosecutor made the startling announcement that Chen was also likely

directly involved and would have been indicted if not for his presidential immunity (Democracy on Trial, 64). This revelation led to massive anti-Chen movements, including the previously mentioned rallies organized by former DPP chairman Shih Ming-teh.

The following graph depicts Taiwanese voter party affiliation from 2004 to 2014. Survey respondents indicating KMT affiliation are illustrated by the blue line, while DPP respondents are illustrated in green. The grey line represents neutral or non-affiliated voters, and the lower colored lines mostly indicate smaller parties such as the TSU and the New Party. The graph provides a visual representation of declining DPP support levels across Chen Shui-bian's presidency. Beginning in 2004, following Chen's dubious presidential election victory, DPP support levels began to see noticeable decline. A sharp drop in support for the DPP can be seen closely mirroring the previously mentioned period of government corruption scandals from January to November of 2006. After the initial shock of these events, support levels normalized to a degree, but the DPP was left in a prolonged weakened condition. Conversely, KMT support levels rose and remained relatively high over the same period. It is also interesting to note the decline in small party affiliation following the 2004 constitutional reforms. Both the New Party and the TSU saw significant drops in voter affiliation following the reforms. The 2008 election sealed the fates of the smaller parties and both fell to near negligible levels of support.



Source: Taiwan Indicators Survey Research (TISR) (台灣指標民調) <http://www.tisr.com.tw/>

When the 2008 presidential elections finally arrived the results were unsurprising to most. The DPP candidate Frank Hsieh was soundly defeated by the KMT's Ma Ying-jeou. Ma won by a landslide and received more votes than any presidential candidate in ROC history (Copper, 61). He ran his campaign on platforms including improved relations with the U.S. and China, cleaning up Taiwan's corrupt government, and revitalizing Taiwan's struggling economy. Ma eventually delivered on all of these promises, although the global economic downturn in 2008 slowed Taiwan's economic recovery for several years (Copper 2013, 61). Since his election Ma's performance as president has generally been viewed as positive. In the 2012 presidential

election he beat his DPP opponent Tsai Ying-wen by a large margin. The performance of the Ma administration and victory in consecutive elections placed the KMT in a position of political dominance in Taiwan that it retains to this day (Copper 2013, 63).

## **Conclusion:**

At the time of this writing there are currently large scale protests in Taipei which have received extensive domestic and international media attention. The protests, dubbed ‘the Sunflower Revolution’ by the Taiwanese media are largely student movements opposing a KMT-designed trade agreement with the PRC. There are two main reasons behind the emergence of such strong opposition to the trade deal. One is that many Taiwanese fear that the new deal will make Taiwan too economically dependent on China and compromise its sovereignty. This argument is largely self-explanatory and has been the most widespread rallying cry for the student protesters. The second, and perhaps more key factor driving the protests, is the manner in which the KMT produced the new trade agreement. Negotiations, structuring, and formulation of the agreement all took place behind closed doors and the deal emerged more as an inevitable political fact, rather than a proposed piece of legislation (Cole).

This situation reflects an unusual break in the KMT history of subtle manipulation. Rather than attempting to pass the new trade deal through management of the traditional channels of negotiation and legislation, the KMT has attempted to force the new deal through in a somewhat heavy handed manner. The implications of this shift in behavioral patterns are intriguing and merit further study. They are, however, beyond the scope of this thesis. The Sunflower Revolution is a popular movement, rather than any sort of formal electoral campaign. Such events are certainly politically significant, however, they are not directly relevant to my study of KMT political party and electoral system manipulation. In order to preserve the quality and depth of my research, I have elected to leave analysis of such events to future scholars.

Taiwan's political history, including the nature of the relationship between its political party and electoral systems is extremely complex. It would be impossible to provide a complete analysis of all the factors involved in these systems' formation and development in the course of one work. What I hope that this thesis has accomplished, however, is to provide an analysis of several key contributing factors and drawing conclusions on their role therein. I will qualify the following conclusions with the reminder that they represent events and circumstances as they appear in Taiwan. While it may be possible to utilize them as a case study to draw broader conclusions on political science theory, that is not their primary purpose here. Further research on how these phenomenon manifest themselves in other nations would likely be required to draw such conclusions and is beyond the scope of this thesis.

First, the Taiwanese electoral system is a result of the political party system. The electoral system was shaped by the KMT during the time of their near total political dominance. It was consciously designed to maintain KMT control after the transition to democracy. The electoral system was also designed to maintain the KMT dominated party system. It has changed over time to suit the changing needs of the KMT, as well as to accommodate the rise of opposition parties.

This leads to my second conclusion: Taiwanese electoral laws are not static phenomenon. They change according to shifts in power among political actors as well as the changing needs of those currently in power. As the DPP gained political power in Taiwan, both it and the KMT initiated electoral system reforms. While these changes sometimes solidified the DPP's position, it was usually not at the expense of the KMT. Rather, most reforms had the effect of slowly diminishing and marginalizing smaller parties.



Next, are some conclusions and summary regarding relevant developments in the Taiwanese political landscape. In the 1990's, following Taiwan's transition to democracy, the KMT initially held a very strong position. This situation represents somewhat of an outlier among former authoritarian parties and is largely an outcome of two unusual features of KMT rule. First, the KMT oversaw a long period of great economic prosperity in Taiwan. This led to a high degree of support for the regime among the Taiwanese people. Second, is that the KMT initiated a transition to democracy at the height of its popularity. This decision allowed them to retain a high degree of political competitiveness and mandate to rule even after democratic transition. More importantly, it allowed them to control the transition to democracy and formulate electoral laws in their favor.

Despite this initial high level of support, the KMT position gradually eroded as the 1990s drew to a close. A combination of rising corruption and factionalization within the KMT led to their defeat by the DPP in the 2000 presidential election. It also led to the rise of two other parties, the PFP and the TSU, and the temporary appearance of an emerging multiparty system. The parties in power, the KMT and the DPP, accordingly altered electoral laws to marginalize these parties and secure their power.

Over the course of the 2000s, the DPP lost support, as problems with corruption, the economy, and foreign relations made the party seem increasingly incompetent. Fundamental differences in party priorities between the DPP and KMT provide clues as to the origins of these problems. The DPP was never focused on economic development or maintaining strong foreign relations. Their strategy has always been, therefore, to emphasize the threat of the PRC and ethnic divides in Taiwan. As the economy languished and ordinary Taiwanese began suffering, these issues seemed increasingly unimportant in comparison to economic security. After the

Chen Shui-bian corruption scandal, the DPP effectively had no remaining legitimate party platform. As such they were doomed to lose in both the 2008 and 2012 elections. Since the electoral reforms in the mid-2000's had marginalized most third parties, these circumstances effectively guaranteed KMT control in the years to come. This situation adds to my thesis that even when electoral reforms apparently benefited the opposition, they were never to the detriment of the KMT.

The KMT has proved surprisingly skilled at maintaining long term political control. Despite its authoritarian roots, the party has deftly navigated campaigning, elections, and governance in Taiwan's democratic system. Much of this was made possible through the KMT's careful control of Taiwan's political party and electoral system development. The party took advantage of the relationship between these two systems to alter circumstances in indirect and discrete ways. By forming appropriate electoral systems, the KMT was able to ensure the formation of a party system that would suit their needs. Later, as conditions changed, the KMT was able to further legislate electoral evolution to eliminate potential challenges to their political control. While this has not always been a smooth and exact process, the small setbacks the KMT has faced have been just enough to solidify the legitimate and competitive nature of Taiwan's democratic system. In short, if all of the world's authoritarian groups were as skilled at power and legitimacy maintenance as the KMT, democracy would exist in name alone.

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